

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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## MODERN SCENIC BACKGROUNDS OF OLD DIME NOVELS

Like all true Americans, the writer has followed—in the papers—the progress of our army on the different battle fronts in the different parts of the world where our boys are fighting; and aside from his patriotism, has been keenly interested in the different locations themselves as in many instances they have been in bygone years, the scenes of adventures of old time tales and romances. The first I wish to call the attention of my readers is Southern Italy and the country about Naples. Here was laid the scene of one of the most famous of the short stories in the English language. By some considered the greatest of them all. This story is "The Iron Shroud." The story relates that during the wars of the Middle Ages the castle of the Prince of Tolfi stood on the summit of a vast and towering cliff overlooking the plains of Sicily and Southern Italy. Here in the dungeons of the castle the prisoners were confined for when a costly ransom was demanded. Here too, in a dungeon excavated deep in the solid rock the miserable victim was immured when revenge pursued. The dark, fierce un pitying revenge of an Italian heart. It had semblance of a vast cage, for the roof and floor and sides were of iron. High above them ran a range of seven barred windows admitting light and air, and tall folding doors occupied the center. The story goes on to tell how slowly, day by day, the iron dungeon closes in on the wretched victim of demon-like hate. With unswerving directness of purpose in keeping with the hidden machinery

of the dungeon, the story moves relentlessly onward to the appalling catastrophe, and the unfortunate prisoner is slowly, day by day contracted by the mysterious engine of death. He was horribly crushed by ponderous roof and collapsing sides, and the iron dungeon was his "Iron Shroud."

The second story I wish to give an account is "Adventures of an Aide De Camp," by the noted Scottish author James Grant. It describes the adventures of a young English officer during the campaign of the English army in Southern Italy in the year 1806, and is a work of thrilling interest, from its description of the picturesque and romantic aspects of conditions then existing, which were much the same as they are today. The young officer met with many strange experiences as an aide-de-camp, and came near losing his life in rescuing lovely Italian ladies; passing through the enemys lines in disguise on secret missions; and above all in his encounters with the blood-thirsty Italian brigands who, in those days, were noted for their merciless cruelty.

But what the members of the Brotherhood want to know is what stories of bygone days had as their background Southern Italy and there is but one answer—The Harkaway stories. The writer is the happy possessor of a volume of Frank Leslie's Boys of America consisting of four volumes bound in one large volume of the first four volumes of that magazine. The First, Second, Third, and Fourth and in them is contained the greater part of the Italian Harkaway stories. But before going further I will give the list of the first of the Harkaway stor-

ies as many of the Brotherhood may have never seen a list of those famous stories.

Jack Harkaway	Schooldays
"	Afloat
"	Among the Savages
"	Escape
"	At Oxford
"	Black Band
"	Among Brigands
"	And the Spy
"	Trapped

The famous stories made their first appearance in the Boys of England, and became immensely popular both in England and America. The ones we are concerned with are the Italian series; and the adventures of Jack and his friends among the brigands of the Italian mountains.

Jack Harkaway during his school days had made a faithful and devoted friend—Dick Harvey. And also Professor Mole. While the devoted black whom he had called Monday, who had become his faithful and courageous follower, ever since he had rescued him from the savages on a South Pacific island. Jack and his friend Dick Harvey on account of his wife's health paid a visit to Italy and resided for a time in Naples. While dwelling in that city he came in contact with a distinguished party calling himself the Prince of Valanova who from time to time appeared in Naples and spent large sums of money in lavish style. This person was in reality the brigand chief Bauni who had an old castle on the river Volturno — right where our boys were fighting—where by the aid of secret passages he gave the impression of his being in one place when he in reality was in another. Jack and his wife were kidnapped by this brigand, but escaped by the efforts of the faithful Dick Harvey, and the brave Monday, who trails the brigand in Italy in the same fashion as he followed the savages in their island home in the far Pacific. As has been shown, Jack and his friends had a whole series of adventures in their war against Baroni which only terminated in the capture of the criminal and his trial and punishment. As has been stated, the Harkaway stories reached the full height of their popularity only after their author came to America and wrote exclusively for Frank Leslie.

The writer has in his collection a picture of the arrival of Bracebridge Hemming in America, and the crowd of boys who were at the dock to welcome him. Jack had one child—a boy. Who took after him to the fullest extent, and who had a whole series of adventures of his own. This was young Jack Harkaway who attained a popularity second only to his famous father. Along with the two Harkaways was their devoted friends Prof. Mole, Dick Harvey, and Monday, the trusty black. After his adventures in the Black Hills, Jack wanted a rest. But hearing that a pirate ship commanded by Hunston, was cruising in the Eastern Seas, he determined to search for her and destroy both him and his pirate crew.

I should have noted in the account of Jack's schooldays, that besides his making faithful friends, he also made a bitter and revengeful foe. This was a man named Hunston, who, in his hate for Harkaway, caused him all manner of trouble, even joining the brigands against him. After his arrival in New York, Jack and a party of his friends started for the Black Hills, then the scene of a great gold excitement, and met with many remarkable adventures. The following is a list of the Titles of the American stories:

Jack Harkaway in America.

- " " Out West Among Indians
- " " Red Dog, Blue Horse, And Ghost that lies in the woods
- " " In Search of Mountains of gold.
- " " And the Secret of Wealth.

While his father and friends were on their way to the Black Hills, young Jack was at Prof. Moles academy. He was there only a short time, but made some friends, and one indictive enemy. In the meantime Jack Senior met with disaster and was captured by the Pirate Chief Hunston who took him to their lair of the malay pirates, the pirate city of Sula Nangala. As he was treated with great indignity by Hunston who confined him in an iron cage on piles in the bed of a river. Young Jack learning of his father's misfortune determined to aid him. By the assistance of his friends he and Prof. Mole and Monday, and others started for Sula Nangala but met the pirates, and were taken pris-

oners. Jack contrived to escape and liberate his father, and capturing a boat they fled from the pirate stronghold to return later for vengeance. The scene of all this is laid right in the part of the South Seas where our boys have been fighting. In the hundreds of small islands in the Coral Sea and the islands that were once the lair of the Malay pirates and the savage head hunters. Before the writer closes he would like to give the titles of the Young Jack Harkaway Series:

Young Jack at Moles Academy.  
Young Jack in Search of His Father  
Young Jack Among the Pirates.  
Young Jack and the Isle of Palms.  
Young Jack Or the Last Stronghold of the Black Flag.

Aside from the Harkaway stories, there were two more short stories published in the Beadles Dime and Half Dime Library. One was The Red Rajah, No. 65 in the Beadles Dime Library. And The Yankee Rajah, Or the Fate of the Black Sheriff. This was No. 230 in the Half Dime Library. The writer could mention others but lack of space forbids. And he only hopes that his article has given both information and amusement to the readers of The Round Up.

### BULLFROG BEN DESCRIBES YREKA JIM

I'm Bullfrog Ben, o' Tarpot City;  
Ef ye'll hark to me, I'll sing ye a ditty  
About a knight both game an' bold,  
Who straddles a hoss, an' gathers gold  
A cool complacent sort of a cuss,  
W'ot makes ye "come down" w'out  
any fuss;  
Purty's a peach, an' fly as a lark,  
Allus on deck 'bout the time thet it's  
dark;  
Rides up to ther hearse, an' raps at  
the door,  
An' tells ye the same story, o'er and  
o'er.  
It's gold thet he wants, an' jew'ry,  
an' tickers,  
An' ef ye object, ye'r 'chronics and  
kickers—  
Ye 'r mean, an' stingy an' hev no  
compassion  
Fer ther widders an' orphints of this  
great nation;  
Then out pops his shooter, we' orful  
precision,  
An' at yer resistance he laffs w' de-  
rision;

He tells ye ter rise, an' make yer do-  
nation,

Ter ther widders an' orphints w'out  
hesitation;

An' ef ye refuse ter obey his command  
His iron sends ye kitin' to that far-  
away land

Whar life is but vapor transparent  
an' thin,

While below reigns in triumph ther  
cool YREKA JIM!

—Sent in by H. O. Rawson

### 'SWAN SONG' OF 'HAPPY DAYS'

by Robert H. Smeltzer

Everything in this world will come to an end eventually, and, as we go thru life we see this fact borne out with things material. Even in nature, a spring will dry up, although previously furnishing "aqua" for years on top of years.

To revert to the theme of my story, I have before me No. 1563 of good, old, "Happy Days." It is dated September 12, 1924, and, incidentally, the price was then heightened to a dime a copy. Publisher: Harry E. Wolff, 166 W. 23rd Street, New York City.

The headline at the top of the cover page reads: "See Notice on Page 8 of this Paper." The information is given as follows:

"This will be the LAST number of 'Happy Days.' Due to lack of support of the reading public, it no longer pays to issue it. There are a few chapters left of 'Charlie, the Corn King' and 'Out for a Fortune.' In order that our subscribers may read the ending of these stories we will print the remaining chapters of 'Charlie, the Corn King' in 'Wild West Weekly' No. 1145, and the remainder of 'Out for a Fortune' will appear in 'Pluck & Luck' No. 1373."

The authors of "Charlie, the Corn King," R. T. Emmet; "The Parson's Boy," Tom Teaser; "Out for a Fortune," C. Little; "Frank, the Fire Chief," Rbert Lennox.

"Happy Days," under the able management of F. A. Tousey was a virile, red blooded, weekly, as its youthful readers of years ago must admit, but, passing from the hands of Tousey it gradually grew into the senile, unattractive makeup, as per the final "chirp"; the front page illustrated, but NOT the middle section, and the

"stalwart" readers, seeing it falling by the wayside, step by step, and the price, per issue, jumping from a nickel to a dime simply spelled "Finis" to one of our finest boys' serial story papers of that era.

## NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

We understand that W. Bert Foster wrote most of the Deadwood Dick Jr. tales in Beadles Half Dime Library.

Geo. Barton says there's a slight error, as the Boys Star Library was a continuation of Boys of New York Pocket Library and reprinted many of the B. O. N. Y. P. L. stories.

Charles Taylor writes us, that he has good news to report. The novels which were stolen, have been returned. A while ago he received a telephone call from an unknown, who said he was a brother of their former maid. He then went on to say that his sister had "gotten religion" and she wanted to make everything all right. She had played a mean trick but now she had acquired salvation or something through the ministrations of Father Divine. She knew she had done wrong, and she wanted to return what she had taken from us. The only reason she had taken them was because she knew they were things which I prized very much. So I told the chap that I was very glad that his sister had gotten salvation, and that that was a pretty good thing to have, and if he would return the books, not only would bygones be considered bygones, the slate wiped clear and everything forgotten, but I would slip him a generous tip for his trouble. So on the following morning, a Sunday, the packages were delivered to my house undamaged, wrapped up just as they were when they came from the binders. How was that for a stroke of good fortune. This means now I have a full set of Tip Top Weekly Nos. 1 to 850, New Tip Top Weekly #1 to 136, etc.

P. S. That's what I call Luck, real Luck.

T. Kenneth Meadway of Boyertown, Pa., says he had a fine novel display at the Local Lions Club Hobby Show and was awarded 15th prize. There were about 65 entries. There were three judges; first, the head of one

of our local industries, a very religious gentleman; second, the minister of one of our larger churches; and third, a young woman who probably does not even remember the Westbury reprints. So I think I did pretty good. Received \$2.50 cash. I had 72 items on display, 32 under glass on a table and the rest on strings in back of the table and wall. I received many favorable comments from those who remembered the old novels.

Cornelius Shea wrote most of the Young Wild West stories under the pen name, by an Old Scout. His sister lives somewhere on Staten Island. We understand she has the complete set of Wild West Weekly.

Both E. T. Gossett and Harry B. Hamilton are ardent Golden Days fans. Both chaps need Vol. I to complete their sets.

John G. Whittier died Sept. 1882. His story was in Robert Bonners New York Ledger, June 30th 1890 titled "The Captain's Well."

Mary Kyle Dallas, another writer of the New York Ledger, died Aug. 25th 1897. Mrs. Dallas was 60 years old and was born in Phila., Pa. She was a daughter of Joseph Kyle, a portrait painter.

George Sahr of Kenosha, Wis., visited ye editor Cummings. He came Sept. 14th and left the 20th. He says he had one of the best times of his life here. Says he never saw so many novels in his life since he came East. He stopped at Ray Caldwells in Lancaster, Pa., for 2 days, Sept. 12 and 13th, and oh boy, that was the start off, then up here, oh boy, then we, Sahr and myself went down to see Eli Messier, the 17th and the 18th up to see Clyde Wakefield. He saw a little different at every place he went. He'll remember this trip.

Charles Duprez and his wife were up Sat. Sept. 22nd for the day, and what he didn't see, he won't miss much I guess. Clyde Wakefield came down in the afternoon, and we all had quite a time. We all had our pictures taken too, as Charlie is a photographer. Some of the pictures will be used later.

Ye editors mother is very sick, so if you don't hear from me right away, you'll know the cause. Lots of sickness everywhere.

Frisco Bert Couch had a bang-up

time of it, with a shindig of a show that he put on. Sir Godfrey Fisher of old England, was one of the many guests. He had lots of fine things. James Boys Loot, Dalton Boys Swag, Cattle Rustlers Fancy, Campfire Hooligan, so Brother, see what we all missed.

George Barton says, "Have we all

seen the 'American Library,' which is being issued by David MacKay of Independence Square, Phila., Pa. George bought No. 4 at a Boston Newsstand, and says it's fine. Has 64 pages, just like an old timer, colored cover, and illustrations on every page, a bit smaller than Pluck and Luck. Price 15c per copy.

#### PARTIAL LIST OF ALL 1945 MEMBERS OF H. H. BRO.

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189. Leon Stone, Elgin St., Gordon, N. S. W., Australia.
193. Laurence L. Smith, Niles Hotel, 310 N. 2nd St., Niles, Mich.
194. T. Kenneth Meadway, 206 W. 6th Ave., Boyertown, Pa.

#### New Member

218. J. V. B. Stewart Hunter, 5 Lulworth Rd., Nottingham, London, S. E. 9, England.

#### Change of Address

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Dave Adams want to buy

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"The Life and Times of Jesse James"  
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**Ralph F. Cummings**

**Fisherville, Mass.**



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(Charles Bragin, Secretary of the Dime Novel Club, recommends purchase of these reprints by its members, of those they haven't got.)

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Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.

